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FM AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA
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UNCLAS BUJUMBURA 000689

SIPDIS

STATE FOR ISN/WMDT AND PM/ISO/PMAT

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: ASEC BY KCRM KNNP MNUC PARM PINR PTER

SUBJECT: NUCLEAR SMUGGLING INCIDENT/PORTAL DETECTION AT
BUJUMBURA

REF: A. STATE 030541

B. BUJUMBURA 00302

¶1. (SBU) Post wishes to alert the Department and Washington agencies per reference A that it has received a report indicating a potential incident of illicit trafficking in nuclear and/or radiological materials. The report was generated by the Defense Attaché (DATT) after a walk-in, Nawab Chakaar, offered to sell a canister of purported uranium to Post at 0915 on 17 December; the same walk-in was involved in a previous presentation of hoax material to the DATT in 2007. The purported material and backstory fit the profile of the common "basket" hoax and Post does not believe the source to be credible.

¶2. (SBU) Details of the incident follow:

Location and Description of Material

- A) The material is purportedly stationary, stored somewhere in Uvira, DRC, approximately 1-2 hours from Bujumbura. Source reports the material is in the hands of unnamed business associates; he claims there are layers of middle-men between the owners of the material and himself. (NFI)
- B) A plaque on the container identifies the contents as U238.
- C) Source stated the material was previously verified radioactive by an unnamed Burundian geological official through use of a Geiger counter; source was unable to provide any evidence or report to back up this claim. Post notes that in a previous "basket case," (reference B) Burundian officials claimed to have no means to detect radiation.
- D) See (B) above.
- E) The identifying plaque indicates 19 kgs of "raw weight" and 3 kgs of "net weight."
- F) Source provided photos of the suspect container. It is a cylindrical metal vessel with an orange/red domed top and an apparently locally-produced woven fiber carrier with handle; a plaque with identifying information on the cylinder is visible through an opening in the basket. Post has provided PMAT scans of the photos via email.
- G) The material is stationary.
- H) The material is stationary.
- I) There is no manifest.
- J) The material's origins are unknown.

Alarm and Detection Details

- K) The report originates from the DATT following a walk-in.
- L) The DATT's meeting with the walk-in occurred at the Chancery at 0915 local time on 17 December 2009.
- M) There was no radiation alarm, and no other technical inspection of the material has taken place.
- N) No spectral file is available.
- O) Only the material, the canister, and the woven fiber

carrier have been reported.

P) See (L) above.

Q) No radiation detector was used, and none are available to Post.

Host Government Response

R) Source claims to have been in contact with the Burundian government concerning this item in the past, but does not claim to have any current dealings with them. Post has not notified the host government, as the incident reported in reference B calls into question the host government's motives and ability to manage incidents of this type.

S) Unknown.

T) Not applicable.

U) Not applicable.

V) Post does not know who else might know about the material.

W) Not applicable.

X) Post does not know whether the IAEA has been alerted to the material's presence.

Y) There is no investigation at present.

Z) No criminal charges have been involved to Post's knowledge.

Details on the individuals involved

AA) Individuals involved:

-- DATT: LtCol Thomas Miller USAF, (257) 22 207 311;

-- Walk-in: Nawab Chakaar, (257) 079939232 Burundi mobile, (255) 763 444 999 Tanzania mobile, email nawabchakaar@yahoo.com. Chakaar claims to be associated with a sub-contractor supporting Barak Gold mining in Tanzania, and with a tour company, Miombo Safaris (www.miombosafaris.com). Post has provided photos of Chakaar to PMAT via email.

BB) Source claimed there were other businessmen involved with the material, but did not give any names or contact information aside from Dr. Salvator Kamanyero. (See item (CC) below.)

CC) Source indicated he wished to establish a relationship with Post, stating he was willing to travel through the region to find other radiological items to sell to Post. Source presented the DATT with a letter vaguely outlining this proposal and referencing his earlier dealings with the previous DATT; this letter was attributed to "Nawab Bahram," not Nawab Chakaar, and also included the name "Dr. Salvator Kamanyero (Africa Relief Agency)." The letter had no signatures. A scan of the letter has been provided to PMAT via email.

DD) Source did not claim associations with any other groups, and stated he did not wish the material to fall into the hands of terrorists or a corrupt government. Source stated he had contacted the US Embassy in Dar-es-Salaam concerning the material, and that the Pentagon was interested in the material as well, but that transportation was a problem, so he decided to contact Post due to its proximity to the material. Post will follow up with Dar-es-Salaam and update PMAT via email.

¶3. (SBU) Action officer at Post for handling incident is DATT LtCol Thomas Miller, at IVG 472-7311.

Slutz